

## Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 AID-05 OMB-01 SSC-01 /093 W

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R 251020Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7873

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 4214

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, MILI, BG

SUBJECT: ARMY SHAKEUP

1. AN EXTENSIVE SHAKEUP AT THE TOP LEVELS OF THE BANGLADESH ARMY WAS ANNOUNCED LAST NIGHT (AUGUST 24). THE CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF (COAS), MAJOR GENERAL K.M. SHAFIULLAH, WAS REPLACED BY THE DEPUTY COAS, MAJOR GENERAL ZIAUR RAHMAN; AS THE ANNOUNCEMENT PUT IT, SHAFIULLAH'S "SERVICES...HAVE BEEN PLACED AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS." IN ADDITION TO THE DEPARTURE OF SHAFIULLAH AND HIS REPLACEMENT BY ZIAUR RAHMAN, THE HEAD OF THE BANGLADESH RIFLES (BDR) (THE BORDER SECURITY FORCE UNDER THE HOME MINISTRY), MAJOR GENERAL KHALILUR RAHMAN, WAS APPOINTED CHIEF OF DEFENSE STAFF, A NEWLY CREATED POSITION. THE  
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DEPUTY COAS POSTING HAS GONE TO AN OFFICER PRESENTLY ON

TRAINING IN INDIA, BRIGADIER H.M. ERSHAD (WHO HAS ALSO BEEN PROMOTED TO MAJOR GENERAL). COMMAND OF THE BDR HAS GONE TO BRIGADIER QAZI GOLAM DASTGIR (ALSO PROMOTED TO MAJOR GENERAL), WHO HAS BEEN BRIGADE COMMANDER, CHITTAGONG.

2. THIS FLURRY OF TRANSFERS HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY ANOTHER NOTEWORTHY APPOINTMENT TO THE MILITARY. GENERAL M.A.G. OSMANI, WHO HEADED THE BANGLADESH ARMED FORCES IN 1971, WHO WAS A MEMBER FOR A TIME IN MUJIB'S GOVERNMENT, AND WHO RESIGNED FROM PARLIAMENT LAST JANUARY IN PROTEST AGAINST MUJIB'S CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES, WAS APPOINTED DEFENSE ADVISOR TOPRESIDENT MUSHTAQUE, WHO HOLDS THE DEFENSE PORTFOLIO.

3. COMMENT: THE OUSTER OF SHAFIULLAH COMPLETES AT LEAST ONE STAGE IN THE ARMY'S EFFORTS TO SORT ITSELF OUT IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE AUGUST 15 COUP (SEE DACCA 4182). SHAFIULLAH MAY HAVE BEEN THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN OVERLY IDENTIFIED WITH MUJIB AND WAS, MOREOVER, GENERALLY REGARDED AS A WEAK LEADER, A QUALITY WHICH WAS SEEN BY SOME AS CONTRIBUTING TO A SLACKENING OF DISCIPLINE AND, THUS, TO THE ACTION OF THE MAJORS. SOME OBSERVERS THINK THAT THE ARMY WILL NOW BE ABLE TO REASSERT ITS AUTHORITY OVER THE COUP PERPETRATORS.

4. THE REASONS FOR THE CREATION OF THE POST OF CHIEF OF DEFENSE STAFF, WHICH IS IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE (AND THUS APPARENTLY SENIOR TO ALL OF THE SERVICE CHIEFS), REMAIN TO BE REVEALED. HOWEVER, THE REASON FOR THE SELECTION OF KHALILUR RAHMAN TO FILL THE POST IS PERHAPS MORE CERTAIN. THE FORMER BDR HEAD IS SENIOR TO ZIAUR RAHMAN (AS HE WAS TO SHAFIULLAH). MOREOVER, HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF MUJIB SINCE HIS REPATRIATION FROM PAKISTAN. (FOLLOWING HIS RETURN TO BANGLADES, KHALILUR RAHMAN WAS SHUNTED OFF INTO THE BDR COMMAND BUT WAS PLACATED WITH PROMOTION FROM BRIGADIER (THE RANK WHICH HE REPORTEDLY HELD IN MARCH 1971) TO MAJOR GENERAL.)

5. WERE OSMANI LESS SENIOR AND NOT A FORMER FULL CABINET MINISTER HIMSELF, HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN APPOINTED AS STATE MINISTER FOR DEFENSE UNDER MUSHTAQUE. THE DEFENSE ADVISOR TITLE AVOIDS THE PROTOCOL PROBLEM AND PUTS OSMANI IN A CONFIDENTIAL

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POSITION TO EXERCISE WHATEVER AUTHORITY MUSHTAQUE MAY DELEGATE TO HIM. THUS, THERE IS SPECULATION THAT OSMANI MAY SERVE AS THE DE FACTO DEFENSE MINISTER.

6. MISSING IN THE SPATE OF ANNOUNCEMENTS IS ANY REFERENCE TO BRIGADIER KHALID MOSHARRAF, THE CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF AND AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE STRUGGLE WITHIN THE ARMY. BOSTER

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